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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 000535

DEPT FOR SE GRATION, S/USSES, AF A A/S CARTER, AF/C, AF/E
NSC FOR MGAVIN AND CHUDSON
DEPT PLS PASS USAID FOR AFR/SUDAN
ADDIS ABABA ALSO FOR USAU

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ASEC](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KPKO](#) [SOCI](#) [AU](#) [UNSC](#) [SU](#)

SUBJECT: USG-GNU SIGNED IMPLEMENTATION PROTOCOL FOR IFES ELECTIONS
ASSISTANCE TO THE NATIONAL ELECTION COMMISSION

SUMMARY

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY. On April 19 CDA Fernandez, Minister of International Cooperation Fidail, Chairman of the National Election Commission Alier, USAID Director Hammink and IFES Country Director Leyraud signed an Implementation Protocol for the Sudan Election Administration Support Program, thus providing the legal basis for IFES to work in northern Sudan, as well as providing urgent election administration support to the NEC for national elections in support of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. IFES is now up and running.
END SUMMARY.

PROTOCOL FOR IFES ELECTIONS ASSISTANCE

¶2. (U) Following several weeks of negotiations, a low-key but positive signing ceremony was held on April 19 at the new offices of the National Election Commission (NEC) in Khartoum. CDA Fernandez, Minister of International Cooperation Dr. Eltigani Saleh Fidail, NEC Chairman Abel Alier, USAID Director Hammink and IFES Country Director Leyraud signed an Implementation Protocol (IP) for the Sudan Election Administration Support Program. Local print and broadcast media attended, and the CDA, Minister and Chairman all gave short statements. The Minister mentioned that this may be the first USG-GOS agreement signed, other than for humanitarian assistance, in some 20 or more years. The Minister and Chairman committed to free and fair elections and thanked the United States Government for this support. The CDA stated, in Arabic, that the agreement is part of the US commitment to free and fair democratic national elections in support of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA).

¶3. (U) The Implementation Protocol (IP) revives the Agreement on Economic and Technical Assistance that was enacted between the two countries in 1958. This IP included the planned project, under which USAID will provide approximately \$25 million to IFES for in-kind assistance to the NEC. The IP also included planned results, objectives and proposed activities, as well as program management modalities. This IP in effect provides the legal basis for IFES to now begin work in earnest in northern Sudan under their USAID contract for election administration assistance to the NEC to support national elections. An oversight committee comprised of the Ministry of International Cooperation (MIC), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Finance, NEC and USAID will guide and monitor IFES activities, including quarterly meetings to approve annual work plans and associated budgets. The IP is not an obligation document, but lays out the overall planned project objectives, activities and implementation modalities. Its purpose is to provide a framework

for the implementing organization, in this case IFES, to work in the country when they are here solely to implement a donor-funded project.

14. (U) The Post election team and IFES will coordinate closely with the various UN agencies and other international donors on election administration assistance.

COMMENT

15. (SBU) This is a positive step forward and comes somewhat sooner than expected, very likely as a result of recent positive U.S. engagement with the GNU during the SE Gration and Codel Kerry visits. The IP will allow the IFES technical advisors to move out of their hotel, rent offices and housing, and begin in earnest substantial technical and commodity support to the NEC to allow the NEC, with other donor, UN and GOS funding, to carry out the many and complex tasks ahead to ensure a free and fair election in accordance with the CPA, interim constitution and 2008 election law. MIC will be responsible now for ensuring that IFES receives timely visas, travel permits, duty free entry of goods, approval to open bank accounts and sign leases, and other GOS approvals needed for normal project implementation by an implementing organization. This approach offers an alternative to all organizations registering with the obstructionist Humanitarian Affairs Commission (HAC) - with which U.S. organizations, and the USG, have had so many problems. Post will monitor closely MIC administrative and process support to IFES to ensure a fast project start up. Even if the MIC is more responsive and cooperative than the HAC, past experience in dealing with all GOS entities had demonstrated that continuous follow-up

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will be required.

FERNANDEZ